

P 041021Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6970
WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY
WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
HQ USAF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
DA WASHDC PRIORITY
CNO WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 001185

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

SIPDIS
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#)1. Iran
- [1](#)2. Mideast
- [1](#)3. Muslims in European Society

Key stories in the media:

Leading media reported that PM Ehud Olmert addressed the AIPAC conference yesterday and focused on Iran, saying that it must be stopped by all possible means. Yediot bannered: "Olmert to Bush: [the U.S. Must] Attack Iran." Olmert was also quoted as saying that the time for Israel and the PA to make tough decisions is fast approaching. Major media reported that Secretary Rice, who also

addressed AIPAC yesterday, stressed the urgency of establishing a Palestinian state, saying that the increase in violence in the Middle East makes the establishment of a peaceful Palestinian state all that more urgent. Ha'aretz noted that her remark was greeted with silence -- though the Secretary had been warmly greeted by the conference. (AIPAC is skeptical that the current Palestinian leadership would be able to control terrorism should a state be established.) Ha'aretz quoted sources in Washington as saying that Rice is concerned that the parties will not be able to reach an agreement before the end of the year, and there will be no possibility of creating continuity in the negotiations with the next U.S. administration. The Jerusalem Post quoted Rice as saying that Hamas will use the truce as a tactic to plan for war. On Iran, Rice was quoted as saying: "We would be willing to meet with them [Iran], but not while they continue to inch closer to a nuclear weapon under the cover of talk."

Ha'aretz reported that Knesset Member Tzachi Hanegbi, who heads Kadima's party affairs committee, will meet today with representatives of the four contenders for the Kadima leadership post to settle on a date for the party primary. Shaul Mofaz, who has already discussed the matter with Hanegbi, wants to hold the primary at the beginning of September, while Livni wants it sooner. The party affairs committee will also have to decide after a new Kadima leader is elected, whether Olmert will be allowed to continue serving as prime minister until the general elections. All media

reported that Mofaz visited the Golan yesterday (Netanyahu made the same trip last week) and said that the area has been and will be a part of Israel, and that Syria is not yet ready for peace. Yediot reported that MK David Tal (Kadima) is busy organizing a referendum on the Golan issue.

The Jerusalem Post quoted Israeli NGO anti-trafficking activists as saying that no significant change is expected in the evaluation of Israel in the State Department's 2008 Trafficking in Persons report, due to be released tomorrow. The newspaper quoted an activist as saying that Israel's path to the top, desired tier is blocked by the inactivity of the Interior Ministry and its "humiliating treatment of victims who have managed to escape the cycle of human trafficking."

Makor Rishon-Hatzofe reported that western diplomats, including senior Americans, have recently secretly met with Hamas officials.

The Jerusalem Post reported that a new government strategy to redefine ties with the Diaspora that will be "less patronizing and more humble," will be unveiled on June 22. The plan calls for quadrupling the funding for Birthright Israel (the program allowing young Jews to get acquainted with Israel in free trips) and for a full-time Jewish world minister.

All media reported that the Tel Aviv District Court will indict former finance minister Abraham Hirschson today on charges of graft.

The media reported that an IDF soldier was moderately wounded yesterday by a Palestinian sniper near the Gaza border and that a terrorist was killed. Five civilians were wounded. The media reported that yesterday a "Faggot" guided missile landed along the Gaza border, and that a 107-mm Katyusha rocket landed in the western Negev.

Maariv quoted Syrian and Turkish media as saying over the past few days that Turkey-mediated indirect Israel-Syria contacts are due to resume tomorrow. The daily cited a denial by the Prime Minister's Office, which said that the principal Israeli negotiators on the Syrian track, Yoram Turbowicz and Shalom Turgeman, are accompanying Olmert on his U.S. trip.

The Jerusalem Post quoted senior defense officials as saying that the government will decide on an Egyptian proposal for a cease-fire in Gaza on Sunday. The newspaper quoted Hamas PM Ismail Haniyeh as saying yesterday that Israel's position regarding the Egyptian

initiative for achieving a truce with the Palestinians is totally unclear, but that does not mean that Hamas does not want a cease-fire.

Major media reported that Syria has told fellow Arab countries that it will not permit an International Atomic Energy Agency probe to extend beyond a site bombed by Israel, despite agency interest in three other locations.

The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday, after Defense Minister Ehud Barak approved the move, the PA opened three police stations in West Bank villages southeast of Jenin.

Maariv quoted Israel's Ambassador to the UK, Ron Prosor, as saying in an interview with London's Times that Israel is prepared to press ahead with Middle East peace negotiations with or without Ehud Olmert as prime minister.

Israel Radio reported that in an interview with Aljazeera-TV, Bar-Ilan University Arabic scholar Dr. Mordechai (Moti) Kedar said that Jerusalem was the Jews' capital when Arabs were "drinking alcohol and burying girls alive."

The media reported that the Israel Broadcasting Authority (IBA), which incorporates Israel TV and Israel Radio, announced yesterday that it will trim its budget by some 40 million shekels (around \$12.2 million) by the end of the year. The Authority's estimated deficit will reach an estimated 150 million shekels (around \$46 million) by the end of December.

Media quoted Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as saying yesterday in Rome that Israel will cease to exist with or without Iran's involvement. Various media quoted him as saying that Europeans like his remarks because people will save themselves from the yoke of the Zionists. Major media reported that yesterday at the Knesset FM Tzipi Livni branded Iran a "neighborhood bully" that must be met with firmness, telling a closed-door meeting of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the international community must take decisive action on Iran and reiterated that military action was an option.

11. Iran:

Summary:

Senior columnist Nahum Barnea wrote on page one of the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "The big question hovering over [Olmert's] visit is whether Bush wishes and is able to impose a military action against Iran on his defense establishment, on the majority in Congress and on public opinion. It is doubtful whether there is any precedent in American history for such a decision in such circumstances."

Block Quotes:

"The Last Chance"

Senior columnist Nahum Barnea wrote on page one of the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (6/4): "When George Duck and Ehud Duck meet this evening, there will be one topic on the table: Iran. All the other issues do not justify a trip to Washington by the Prime Minister less than a month after he hosted the President in Jerusalem. The big question hovering over the visit is whether Bush wishes and is able to impose a military action against Iran on his defense establishment, on the majority in Congress and on public opinion. It is doubtful whether there is any precedent in American history for such a decision in such circumstances. Almost everything is working against it. The Iranians are not threatening the United States. They are taking care not to cause an incident which would give the Americans a pretext for attacking them. For such an attack there is no international support, not at least in public, and the main thing is that after the entanglement in Iraq, a majority of Americans are opposed to opening another front in the Middle East and regard any military initiative by Bush with suspicion.... Bush and Olmert will have no difficulty in reaching agreement on the gravity of the Iranian threat and the need to block it. It is easy to agree on but

it is very difficult to prevent. According to the polls 75 percent of Americans want the next president to meet Ahmadinejad, not to fight him. Among Republican supporters the figure is 50 percent. The Republican candidate John McCain, who addressed the AIPAC conference yesterday, ruled out negotiations with the Iranian president. The members of the Jewish lobby gave him a standing ovation, but the political analysts warned McCain that the voters would not like it."

12. Mideast:

Summary:

Uri Elitzur, who was director of former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's bureau, wrote in the editorial of the nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe: "The President of the U.S. knows that he is facing a plucked chicken."

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "Opponents of the tahdiya [truce] must clarify how they intend to restore this lost glory and stabilize the state's security."

Former Ambassador to the U.S., former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and former Minister of Defense Moshe Arens wrote in Ha'aretz: "Only a decisive victory in the war against the terrorists in the South will assure Israel's safety. A cease-fire will be a victory for the terrorists and a defeat for the IDF."

Alon Liel, who was director-general of the Foreign Ministry and ambassador to Turkey, wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv: "Mr. Prime Minister.... [Israeli-Syrian] talks cannot take off without the Americans. You're the only one who can explain to Washington what you've already understood."

Block Quotes:

1I. "A Hollow Visit"

Uri Elitzur, who was director of former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's bureau, wrote in the editorial of the nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe (6/4): "The President of the U.S. knows that he is facing a plucked chicken, and while Olmert is in Washington, his party fellows and his coalition partners are busy trying to reach an agreement for early elections, or the establishment of an alternative government without elections.... However, we must be careful. In his distress, the Prime Minister might be tempted to turn the spin and public relations into real diplomatic moves.... Over the past few weeks we have already been

seared on the Syrian track. It is no accident that yesterday the Syrian President dared declare that his goal is to achieve an Israeli pullout up to Tiberias."

II. "Is War Preferable?"

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (6/4): "Most members of the security cabinet reject the tahdiya, the temporary cease-fire that Israel and Hamas are negotiating indirectly via Egypt. Their main explanation is that such a deal will allow Hamas to arm itself in a way that could pose a strategic threat to Israel.... Therefore, Israel is asking Egypt, and through it, Hamas, for a commitment that there will be no transfer of arms to the Gaza Strip.... But Israel has recently posed another condition: the release of abducted soldier Gilad Shalit in return for opening the Rafah crossing.... It is ... hard to be persuaded by the security logic of the demand to link the two deals, and the move to make one contingent on the other.... The government's reputation and the state's security have already been damaged by Shalit's abduction, and the government's failure to eliminate the Qassam threat or protect the South's citizens. Opponents of the tahdiya must clarify how they intend to restore this lost glory and stabilize the state's security. Otherwise, it would be best if they let the original deal

move ahead, bring back Shalit and provide a little quiet to the South."

III. "Another Defeat"

Former Ambassador to the U.S., former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and former Minister of Defense Moshe Arens wrote in Ha'aretz (6/4): "If Israel's ability to defend itself should be called into question, this would not only spell the end of any chance to widen the circle of peace, but would also increase the probability of another full-scale war. That is what hangs in the balance in the confrontation with the terrorists in the South. They know -- and we must relearn, if we have forgotten -- that the life expectancy of a Middle Eastern country that shows it cannot defend itself is likely to be very short. That is the challenge that faces the IDF and its commander today. Only a decisive victory in the war against the terrorists in the South will assure Israel's safety. A cease-fire will be a victory for the terrorists and a defeat for the IDF. Of course, it is the government, even in its present state, that will

have to make the decision. But it is the Chief of Staff who must tell the government that he is capable of scoring a victory that will leave no doubt over who won this war."

IV. "Talk to Bush, Ehud"

Alon Liel, who was director-general of the Foreign Ministry and ambassador to Turkey, wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (6/3): "Mr. Prime Minister.... You have the opportunity to conclude the conflict with Syria and through it, the Israeli-Arab conflict. You have the opportunity to succeed where President Bush himself failed -- to turn the countries bordering Israel into more moderate ones, and to tip the Mideast scales in favor of the moderate camp. You won't be able to do this without your friend President Bush. Even he, at the end of his political days, is still able to make history. Ask him to appoint an American envoy to the Israel-Syria talks in Turkey.... You already went a long way until the beginning of the official meetings with Assad. Those talks cannot take off without the Americans. You're the only one who can explain to Washington what you've already understood."

13. Muslims in European Society:

Summary:

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Britain appears, finally, to be recognizing the menace radical Islam presents and willing to do something smart about it. The rest of the free world has an immense stake in its success."

Block Quotes:

"Britain vs. Islamism"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (6/4): "Some Britons, mobilized by a minority of academics, radical Muslims, the hard Left and its gormless fellow-travelers, blame British and foreign policy for Muslim 'discontent.' These elements are also behind the renewed effort by the University and College Union (UCU) to boycott Israeli academics. But others are beginning to understand what they are up against, and what they must do to preserve liberal society and the British way of life. Part of the solution relates to security.... Equally important, however, is empowering moderate Islam. Yesterday the Home Office announced a GBP 12.5 million 'de-radicalization' program targeting Muslims who have been co-opted by radical Islam -- people who have 'already crossed the line' in terms ideology, but not yet committed violent acts. The program offers monitoring and a form of amnesty for participants, British-born Muslim scholars would be called upon to teach the Islamic path toward tolerance and non-violence to state schools. The goal is not to have Muslims abandon their religion, but to systematically offer them a more moderate interpretation. It

is not clear whether Gordon Brown's shaky government will be able to implement these proposals, or even whether such brave and moderate Muslim educators can be found. But on the 15th anniversary of [Samuel P. Huntington's] 'Clash of Civilizations', Britain appears, finally, to be recognizing the menace radical Islam presents and willing to do something smart about it. The rest of the free world has an immense stake in its success."

JONES